

SPECIFICATION

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[INTEGRATED CAPACITOR AND METHOD OF MAKING SAME]

Background of Invention

[0001] 1.Field of the Invention

[0002] The present invention relates to an integrated capacitor and method of making the same. More particularly, the present invention relates to an electrically polar integrated capacitor, which has a substantially perfect matching property, suited for analog/digital(A/D) converters, digital/analog(D/A) converters, or switch cap circuits.

[0003] 2.Description of the Prior Art

[0004] Passive components such as capacitors are extensively used in integrated circuit (IC) design for radio-frequency (RF) and mixed-signal applications, such as filters, resonant circuits, and bypassing. Due to trends toward higher-levels of integration to achieve a reduction in costs associated with IC fabrication processes, the IC industry continually strives to economize each step of the fabrication process to the greatest extent possible.

[0005] Fig.1 is a typical view fragmentarily illustrating a high capacitance density integrated capacitor according to the prior art. As shown in Fig.1, the prior art integrated capacitor 1 consists of a plurality of parallel-arranged vertical metal plates 100 and 120. In Fig.1, different shadings are used to distinguish the two terminals of the capacitor 1, where the vertical plates 120 are electrically connected to a terminal A (or node A), and the vertical plates 100 are electrically connected to a terminal B (or node B). The vertical metal plates 100 and 120 are fabricated on a semiconductor substrate (not explicitly shown). Each of the vertical metal plates 100 consists of a plurality of metal slabs 10a, 10b, 10c, and 10d connected vertically using multiple via

plugs 11a, 11b, and 11c that are typically composed of metals. Each of the vertical metal plates 120 consists of a plurality of metal slabs 12a, 12b, 12c, and 12d connected vertically using multiple via plugs 13a, 13b, and 13c. The vertical plate 100 and the vertical plate 120 are isolated from each other by a dielectric layer (not shown). Generally, metal slabs 10a, 10b, 10c, and 10d and metal slabs 12a, 12b, 12c, and 12d of the prior art integrated capacitor 1 are fabricated in an interconnect process known in the art. Unlike the traditional metal-on-metal (MOM) capacitors as known to those versed in the art, the prior art integrated capacitor 1 is fabricated without using extra photo-masks, thereby reducing production cost. Moreover, the prior art integrated capacitor 1 provides higher capacitance per unit area.

[0006]

However, in operation, parasitic capacitance is produced at both the node A and the node B of the prior art integrated capacitor 1 between the vertical plate 120 and the substrate and between the vertical plate 100 and the substrate, hence rendering the prior art integrated capacitor 1 electrically non-polar. Please refer to Fig.2 with reference to Fig.1. Fig.2 is an equivalent circuit diagram of the prior art integrated capacitor 1 as set forth in Fig.1. As mentioned, the vertical plates 120 of the integrated capacitor 1 are electrically connected to the node A, and the vertical plates 100 of the integrated capacitor 1 are electrically connected to the node B. In operation, inter-plate capacitance C_{in} , parasitic capacitance C_A , and parasitic capacitance C_B are generated between the node A and the node B. The parasitic capacitance C_A is induced between lowest metal slab 10a of the vertical metal plate 100 and the electrically grounded semiconductor substrate. The parasitic capacitance C_B is induced between lowest metal slab 12a of the vertical metal plate 120 and the electrically grounded semiconductor substrate. Due to the non-polar property presented by the prior art integrated capacitor 1, the prior art integrated capacitor 1 is therefore not suited for the design of analog/digital(A/D) converters, digital/analog (D/A) converters, or switch cap circuits. Moreover, it is also known that the prior art integrated capacitors 1 suffer from a so-called "matching" problem. Referring to Fig.3, an enlarged top view of a conventional finger-type integrated capacitor 30 is illustrated. As shown in Fig.3, the prior art finger-type integrated capacitor 30 comprises a plurality of finger-interlaced like capacitor units 31, each of which consists of a vertical metal plate 311 electrically connected to a node A and a vertical

metal plate 312 electrically connected to a node B. The conventional finger-type integrated capacitor 30 is not "matching" because that the four sides (i.e., the a, b, c, d sides as specifically indicated) of the non-symmetric capacitor unit 31 are facing different surrounding environments respectively. One approach to solving this problem is using a dummy metal layout surrounding each of the capacitor units 31. However, this approach cannot perfectly solve the above-mentioned problem and also wastes a great deal of valuable chip area.

Summary of Invention

[0007] Accordingly, the primary objective of the claimed invention is to provide an electrically polar integrated capacitor with a high capacitance density, which is perfectly "matching" and is suited for analog/digital(A/D) converters, digital/analog (D/A) converters, and switch cap circuits.

[0008] According to one preferred embodiment of the claimed invention, an integrated capacitor having an electrically polar property is disclosed. The integrated capacitor comprises a semiconductor substrate. An outer vertical plate is laid over the semiconductor substrate. The outer vertical plate consists of a plurality of first conductive slabs connected vertically using multiple first via plugs. The outer vertical plate defines a grid area. An inner vertical plate is laid over the semiconductor substrate in parallel with the first vertical plate and is encompassed by the grid area defined by the outer vertical plate. The inner vertical plate consists of a plurality of second conductive slabs connected vertically using multiple second via plugs. A horizontal conductive plate is laid under the outer vertical plate and inner vertical plate over the semiconductor substrate for shielding the outer vertical plate from producing a plate-to-substrate parasitic capacitance thereof. The inner vertical plate is electrically connected with the horizontal conductive plate using at least one third via plug.

[0009] The foregoing has outlined, rather broadly, preferred and alternative features of the claimed invention so that those skilled in the art may better understand the detailed description of the invention that follows. Additional features of the invention will be described hereinafter that form the subject of the claims of the invention. Those skilled in the art should appreciate that they can readily use the disclosed

conception and specific embodiment as a basis for designing or modifying other structures for carrying out the same purposes of the claimed invention. Those skilled in the art should also realize that such equivalent constructions do not depart from the spirit and scope of the invention in its broadest form.

Brief Description of Drawings

- [0010] Fig.1 is an enlarged typical view fragmentarily illustrating a high-density integrated capacitor structure according to the prior art.
- [0011] Fig.2 is an equivalent circuit diagram of the prior art integrated capacitor as set forth in Fig.1.
- [0012] Fig.3 is an enlarged top view of a conventional finger-type integrated capacitor.
- [0013] Fig.4 is an enlarged top view of an integrated capacitor unit according to the present invention.
- [0014] Fig.5 is an enlarged perspective view fragmentarily illustrating an integrated capacitor unit of Fig.4.
- [0015] Fig.6 is an equivalent circuit diagram of the integrated capacitor as set forth in Fig.5.
- [0016] Fig.7 is an enlarged top view of the integrated capacitor structure according to another preferred embodiment of this invention.

Detailed Description

- [0017] Please refer to Fig.4. Fig.4 is an enlarged top view of a highly-matching integrated capacitor unit 40 according to the present invention. As shown in Fig.4, the integrated capacitor unit 40 comprises an outer vertical metal plate 41 laid on a semiconductor substrate in a grid form and inner vertical metal plates 42a, 42b, 42c, and 42d arranged in parallel with the outer vertical metal plate 41. In this case, the outer vertical metal plate 41 defines four grid areas 41a, 41b, 41c, and 41d, which accommodate therein the four inner vertical metal plates 42a, 42b, 42c, and 42d, respectively. The outer vertical metal plate 41 is insulated from the four inner vertical metal plates 42a, 42b, 42c, and 42d using an insulation material 45 such as an inter-

layer dielectrics (ILD) typically used in semiconductor fabrication processes. The outer vertical metal plate 41 and the inner vertical metal plates 42a, 42b, 42c, and 42d are formed on a semiconductor substrate (not shown). Each of the outer and inner vertical metal plates consists of a plurality of metal slabs connected vertically with multiple metal plugs. According to the preferred embodiment of this invention, the outer vertical metal plate 41 is electrically connected to a node A, and the four inner vertical metal plates 42a, 42b, 42c, and 42d are electrically connected to a node B via a bottom conductive plate, which will be discussed later on.

[0018] It is noteworthy that the number of grid areas as set forth in Fig.4 is only exemplary. In a boundary case, integrated capacitor having an outer vertical metal plate 41 defining only one grid area (or two, or three grid areas) thereof also works well according to the present invention. Those versed in the art should appreciate that they can readily use the disclosed conception and specific embodiment as a basis for designing or modifying other structures for carrying out the same purposes of the claimed invention.

[0019] Please refer to Fig.5. Fig.5 is a perspective, cross-sectional view fragmentarily illustrating a high capacitance density, highly-matching integrated capacitor unit 40 as set forth in Fig.4 according to the present invention. As shown in Fig.5, the integrated capacitor unit 40 consists of parallel-arranged outer vertical metal plates 41 in a grid form and inner vertical metal plates 42. In Fig.5, likewise, different shadings are used to distinguish the two terminals of the integrated capacitor unit 40, where the outer vertical metal plate 41 is electrically connected to a terminal A (or node A), and the inner vertical plates 42 are electrically connected to a terminal B (or node B). The vertical metal plates 41 and 42 are fabricated on a semiconductor substrate (not explicitly shown). The outer vertical metal plate 41 consists of a plurality of metal slabs 411a, 411b, 411c, and 411d connected vertically using multiple via plugs 412a, 412b, and 412c that are typically composed of metals. Each of the inner vertical metal plates 42 consists of a plurality of metal slabs 421a, 421b, 421c, and 421d connected vertically using multiple via plugs 422a, 422b, and 422c. The outer vertical plate 41 and the inner vertical plate 42 are isolated from each other by at least one dielectric layer (not shown). According to this invention, metal slabs 411a, 411b, 411c, and 411d and metal slabs 421a, 421b, 421c, and 421d of the

integrated capacitor unit 40 are fabricated in an interconnect process known in the art. Since the integrated capacitor unit 40 is fabricated without using extra photo-masks, production cost is reduced.

[0020] Still referring to Fig.5, the integrated capacitor unit 40 of this invention further comprises a horizontal bottom conductive plate 43 laid between the underlying semiconductor substrate (not explicitly shown) and the overlying integrated vertical metal plates 41 and 42. The horizontal bottom conductive plate 43 is electrically connected with the inner vertical metal plates 42 using via plugs 431. The horizontal bottom conductive plate 43 is electrically isolated from the outer vertical metal plate 41 using at least one dielectric layer (not shown). The horizontal bottom conductive plate 43 is made of conductive materials such as metals or polysilicon. According to the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the conductive plate 43 is defined with the first layer metal (metal 1) in the interconnection process of the integrated circuit.

[0021] Please refer to Fig.6. Fig.6 is an equivalent circuit diagram of the integrated capacitor unit 40 as set forth in Fig.5. The outer vertical metal plate 41 of the integrated capacitor unit 40 is electrically connected to the node A, and the inner vertical metal plates 42 of the integrated capacitor unit 40 are electrically connected to the node B via the bottom conductive plate 43. In operation, inter-plate capacitance C_{in} and parasitic capacitance C_B are generated between the node A and the node B. The parasitic capacitance C_B is induced between the bottom conductive plate 43 and the electrically grounded semiconductor substrate. It is noteworthy that there is no parasitic capacitance produced at the node A due to the shielding of the bottom conductive plate 43. Since the integrated capacitor unit 40 has a polar property, it is suited for the design of analog/digital(A/D) converters, digital/analog(D/A) converters, and switch cap circuits.

[0022] Please refer to Fig.7. Fig.7 is an enlarged top view illustrating a portion of the symmetric, perfectly matching integrated capacitor structure according to this invention. As shown in Fig.7, the integrated capacitor structure is comprised of a matrix of symmetric integrated capacitor units 70, each of which comprises an outer vertical metal plate 71 in a grid form and inner vertical metal plates 72. The outer

vertical metal plate 71 is electrically connected to the node A and the inner vertical metal plates 72 are electrically connected to the node B. Since the four sides of each of the integrated capacitor units 70 are facing substantially same surrounding environment, the integrated capacitor structure according to this invention is therefore approaching perfect matching. There is no need in this invention to adopt dummy metals that typically lay surrounding each of the integrated capacitor units, and hence saving a lot of valuable chip area and production cost.

[0023] Further, this invention also discloses a method of forming an integrated capacitor. The method comprises the following steps:(a) providing a semiconductor substrate comprising an outer vertical plate consisting of a plurality of first conductive slabs connected vertically using multiple first via plugs, and an inner vertical plate consisting of a plurality of second conductive slabs connected vertically using multiple second via plugs, wherein the outer vertical plate defines a grid area, and the inner vertical plate is encompassed by the grid area defined by the outer vertical plate;(b) providing a conductive plate under the outer vertical plate and the inner vertical plate on the semiconductor substrate for shielding the outer vertical plate from producing a plate-to-substrate parasitic capacitance thereof; and(c) electrically connecting the inner vertical plate with the conductive plate using at least one third via plug.

[0024] Those skilled in the art will readily observe that numerous modifications and alterations of the device and method may be made while retaining the teachings of the invention. Accordingly, the above disclosure should be construed as limited only by the metes and bounds of the appended claims.